

# EAGLETON INSTITUTE

AN ALL-NEGRO TICKET IN BALTIMORE

G. James Fleming

10

320.8

E11c

No.10

1960

McGRAW-HILL BOOK COMPANY, INC.



OF POLITICS  
AITEE

*general editorship of Paul Tillett of the  
with the assistance of the Case Advisory*

PRESENTED BY

Eugene D. Levy

Maxwell School, Syracuse University  
Inter-University Case Program  
Political Science, University of

Graduate School, The University of

Political Science, University of

California at Los Angeles

*Ralph K. Huitt*, Professor of Political Science, The University of  
Wisconsin

*William J. Keefe*, Chairman of the Political Science Department,  
Chatham College

*Neil A. McDonald*, Professor of Political Science, Douglass College  
*Dayton McKean*, Dean of the Graduate School, University of Colorado

*Howard Penniman*, Chairman of the Department of Government,  
Georgetown University

The Eagleton Institute of Politics Studies in Practical Politics are premised on the importance and utility of political parties in American political life and are designed to increase understanding of the vital contribution to American democracy of partisan political activity. They introduce the case method, already applied successfully to business and public administration curricula, into the teaching of American politics. Cases provide an inside look at practical politics; these are aimed at improving student interest and performance in introductory through graduate courses. The cases themselves are lucid, dispassionate accounts of actual political activity—campaigning, financing, programming, framing issues, running affairs of state—built on materials not found between hard covers, materials hitherto locked in the oral tradition of politics. The program in practical politics contemplates continuous replenishment of cases to assure comprehensive coverage and to keep the cases close to political realities, student interests, and teaching needs.

Copyright © 1960 by Rutgers, The State University  
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 60-15080

Printed in the United States of America

# AN ALL-NEGRO TICKET IN BALTIMORE

G. James Fleming

Most of Baltimore took in its stride the election of 1958, when candidates were chosen for the United States Senate, the House of Representatives, the Maryland legislature, and several judicial positions. One could visit—as some did visit—precinct after precinct across the city without meeting a single buttonholing campaigner, without being handed a single piece of literature, without seeing knots of campaign workers, and without witnessing any of the other usual signs of spirited partisanship.

In the 4th Legislative District, however, there were no quiet or sleepy precincts. For blocks in every direction from a polling place were cadres of active, outspoken, hard-selling workers, heavily armed with arguments and literature.

On most election days in Baltimore only one worker, or at most two workers, for each party will be stationed at each corner of an intersection. In this struggle for votes in the 4th District, one of the two contesting factions placed as many as four workers at each corner. A voter, en route to his polling place, could not escape the verbal assaults of the partisans. There was even electioneering among the paid hands themselves to entice workers from one side to the other.

At the polling places, feelings ran high and tempers erupted; charges met countercharges and workers threatened one another. Throughout the day charges that voting machines were being tampered with were directed to the policemen on duty, and telephone complaints poured into the office of the Supervisors of Elections. There were charges that some polling places had not been opened at the announced 6 A.M. hour; the evening papers reported that "the machine" had been photographing Negro voters inside one polling place; there were also rumors, oral and printed, that the FBI was watching the election in the 4th District.

The hyperactivity attending this election in the 4th Legislative District must be credited to the contest for seven seats in the state legislature—one in the Senate and six in the house of delegates—a contest in which a bipartisan, all-Negro coalition ticket was challenging the candidates of the Democratic organization led by James H. (Jack) Pollack.

NOV 14 '78

HUNT LIBRARY  
CARNEGIE-MELLON UNIVERSITY  
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA 15213

## MARYLAND PARTIES

Maryland has been classified as a "normally Democratic"<sup>1</sup> state, although in 1959 both United States Senators were Republicans, from 1951 to 1959 its governor was Republican, and from 1943 to 1947 the mayor of Baltimore was Republican (the mayor and governor being the same person, Theodore R. McKeldin). The legislature has been predominantly Democratic and, with few exceptions, the Baltimore city council solidly Democratic. Fourth District representatives in the legislature and the city council are also usually solidly Democratic, reflecting the voter registration of the district—in 1959, 37,239 Democrats to 15,754 Republicans. Successful politics in the 4th District is Democratic politics.

Another significant characteristic of the 4th District, is the fact that in recent years it has acquired a Negro majority.<sup>2</sup> In mid-1958 there were about 30,049 Negroes and 22,942 whites registered as voters in the district. Thus, Negroes comprised nearly 57 percent of the registered voters. A reliable estimate of party-racial distribution, based on figures compiled by the Board of Election Supervisors, is shown below.

Registered Voters, 4th Legislative District, Dec. 1, 1957 <sup>a</sup>

	<i>Negro</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Total</i>
Democrats .....	14,554	14,759	29,313
Republicans .....	11,562	8,231	19,883
Total .....	26,206	22,990	49,196

<sup>a</sup> In Baltimore, the Board of Election Supervisors keeps registration statistics by race and by party.

## 4TH DISTRICT UNDER THE "BOSS"

In 1958 the white population of the 4th District was predominantly Jewish. The dominant political organization (the "Pollack machine") was Democratic. It was headed by James H. Pollack, a nonofficeholding businessman and the most powerful political leader in the city. Many informants regard him as the most powerful political leader in the entire state.

According to an observer of Baltimore politics who knows Pollack well, the Democratic leader rose from humble beginnings, driven first by the desire for money, then for power, and recently for respectability. All these drives are still active, but the most compelling is his thirst for power. Within the organization, his power is almost absolute and the most serious error any member (including incumbents of high public office) can make is to intimate a desire to share in decision-making. Lacking genuine political finesse, he possesses a sixth sense about people and the state of their loyalty to the organization. Under his leadership the Democrats have been very successful.

<sup>1</sup> V. O. Key, Jr., *American State Politics* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), p. 204.

<sup>2</sup> For the entire city, Negroes in mid-1958 numbered 301,000 in a total population of 982,000, or about 30 percent of the total, according to figures of the Baltimore City Department of Health. (Exact figures are not available.)

Both the man and the organization have entered the folklore of the city. Great power is attributed to both, but especially to Pollack. Some residents of Baltimore believe the organization to be ruthless in its control of political jobs and Pollack-sponsored incumbents. From the highly desirable post of executive secretary to a licensing agency, the organization's man reports the names of applicants for city licenses. New tax legislation, it is said, is announced, only to be "killed" after the business targets of the tax contribute to the organization. On election day, however, one informant explained with a sigh, in Baltimore, as elsewhere, direct payments for votes have extremely little value—"most people are above that, and those who are not are so cynical and sophisticated that they take the money and don't deliver." Another factor of strength, admitted but rarely volunteered, has been the personal qualifications of many organization candidates. At the state office level, at any rate, they have tended to belong to the progressive wing of the Democratic party and to reflect the aspirations of their urban constituents to employ government for the improvement of working and living conditions.

Despite a tight organization, the Pollack forces have occasionally been challenged by factions or by lone candidates, who have usually gone down to defeat. Nonmachine Democrats, Republicans, other factional interests, and editorial writers have condemned bossism or sulked, but they have not broken the Pollack control. The district sentiment has been, "You can't beat Jack Pollack" and "If you can't beat him, join him."

Among the critical groups have been the Negroes, stimulated by their growing population strength in the district and in the city. Negro leaders have contended that problems such as poor housing, unequal job opportunities, denial of public accommodation, and discrimination in admission to and promotion in the civil service are linked to their lack of representation in the lawmaking bodies. They have charged that, because of boss control, Negroes are ignored. They have pointed to their population ratio in the district and have found that, whether they were 25 percent, 40 percent, or even 49 percent of the district, they have not been given satisfactory political recognition. One Negro leader commented that Negro supplicants to the Democratic organization were told at one time that "Negroes are not a majority of the district." Later, when Negroes had become more than 50 percent of the district's population, he was told that "Negroes are not organized to win recognition."

### THE NEGRO CHALLENGE

Until 1954, all candidates for the legislature and city council from the 4th District were Jewish. The Baltimore *Sun* observed, on June 4, 1958, that "a Pollack-backed candidate was invariably white and Jewish." In a later editorial (September 30, 1958) the *Sun* added: "As long as the Pollack machine held undisputed control in the 4th District . . . [the] machine backed no candidate who was not Jewish. Negroes had no place in the organization planning when it came to elective office."

In 1954, for the first time, the 4th District machine was seriously challenged from the Negro community. In that year a Negro independent Democrat won in the primaries and became a candidate for the house of delegates; in the

Republican primary two Negroes were nominated, one for the senate, the other for the lower house. All three fought Pollack candidates. Leading this anti-Pollack challenge for the state senate was the young Republican candidate, Harry A. Cole, a graduate of the University of Maryland Law School and a former special assistant attorney general. The other two candidates were Emory Cole, a Republican, and Truly Hatchett, an independent Democrat.

These three candidates exploited the lack of representation of Negroes in the state legislature and appealed for support across party lines. The Pollack machine fought back in many ways, including the last-minute selection of a Pollack-chosen Negro candidate to split the Negro vote for the senate. For the most part, however, the machine relied on its superior organization, its comfortable financial position, favorable Democratic registration, the lethargy of Negro voters, and the generally admitted personal strength of its candidate for re-election to the state senate.

The three Negroes won, and from 1955 to 1958, for the first time in the history of Maryland, there were Negro members in the state legislature. Most important, politically, this achievement by Negroes demonstrated that the machine could be defeated, even by meagerly financed opposition candidates, and that Negroes would cross party lines to secure political representation for their race.

### SIGNS OF REBELLION

The Pollack machine read the signs. In the 1955 councilmanic elections, it included one Negro among its three candidates for city council and thereby thwarted another threatened antiboss challenge from the Negro community.<sup>3</sup> But there were indications that the Negro community and its leaders were comparing the political gains among local Negroes with what were considered the greater gains and recognition won in Baltimore by other minorities—Italians, Poles, Jews, and Catholics. Outspoken Negroes occasionally quoted the observation of a former Johns Hopkins University professor, V. O. Key, Jr., who wrote that in political matters “seldom . . . does the Negro exert a strength commensurate with his numbers. If Harlem, for example, were filled with Irishmen instead of Negroes, New York City would probably resemble the Irish Free State; but the Negro influence is less pervasive.”<sup>4</sup>

The Negro leadership, led by the organized Negro ministry and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, waged a continuous drive during 1957–1958 to increase voter registration in the city, especially in the 4th District, and increased the number of Negroes registered in the city by 30,000 bringing the new total to more than 100,000.

There was also talk in pulpits, on platforms, and in editorials about more representation for Negroes in the government of the city and state. Negro

<sup>3</sup> In earlier years, Negroes had won election to the Baltimore City Council with Republican backing, but in 1931 the then dominantly Negro district was gerrymandered to prevent more such elections. The present 4th District's Democratic leadership came into power in the early 1930s.

<sup>4</sup> V. O. Key, Jr., *Politics, Party and Pressure Groups* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 3d ed., 1952), p. 134.

speakers and voters protested the defeat of an omnibus civil rights law in the state legislature and the shelving of an ordinance to outlaw racial and religious discrimination in public places in Baltimore, and made repeated complaints about the relatively few Negroes in the city and state civil service, especially in important positions. Much of this discussion argued that Negroes were entitled to more jobs in city and state government because they make up more than half of the district population.

The most influential voice was the editorial page of the *Afro-American*. Dr. Carl Murphy, president of the *Afro* newspaper chain, is generally credited with being the man behind the voice and is noted for having led campaigns to improve the status of Negro Marylanders in such matters as the equalization of pay for teachers and the lowering of racial barriers at the state university. Well-to-do, widely respected, and a registered, although independent, Democrat, he became the guiding spirit behind the group moving toward a bipartisan coalition. His crusade for full racial equality began many years earlier when he received a letter rejecting his application for admission to Johns Hopkins University solely on the basis of color. His position as the publisher of a newspaper for Negroes gives him a place of considerable influence in the Negro community.<sup>5</sup>

State Senator Harry Cole, one of the first three Negroes to enter the state legislature in 1954, remained a strident, needling voice in the legislature. He introduced several civil rights bills, none of which passed, and found many occasions to speak for the interests of Negroes.

Mrs. Lillie Jackson, for nearly thirty years president of the Baltimore branch of the NAACP, probably would be given a place of high respect by the rank and file because of her long years devoted to racial uplift, her uncompromising positions, and her old-fashioned eloquence. As one member of a mass-meeting audience was once heard to say, "She moves mountains."

A number of ministers were also important leaders: J. Timothy Boddie, Arthur J. Payne, Marion C. Bascom, Harrison J. Bryant, John H. Tilley, Edward G. Carroll, and Bishops B. Monroe Saunders and Randolph A. Carr. These clergymen represent a number of denominations. Many other ministers, while not outspoken in the community at large, encourage their own congregations to be politically active or support campaigns for racial advancement. Many have long been staunch members of the NAACP.

Some critics of the racial *status quo* have pushed for more recognition for Negroes in politics and government from within the reigning political organizations. But others, like Robert B. Watts, lawyer and Democrat, broke away

<sup>5</sup> While many white persons may not be aware of it, the press in most communities does not serve several important needs of Negroes, tending to ignore all Americans of color between Ralph Bunche and Emmet Till, except on the sports pages. The Negro press, which exists in every major city (there are approximately 150 Negro weeklies and two dailies, in Atlanta and Chicago), besides keeping its readers informed of social events ignored by the white press, presents the racial side of the news, interpreting public affairs from the point of view of the special interests of Negro Americans. Although much copy fairly crackles with the self-conscious humor of a people aware of its own predicament and determined, in the words of one popular columnist, to ". . . keep 'em squirming," the papers also instruct, exhort, and organize their readers to press for first-class citizenship.

from the machine, supported Harry Cole in 1954, and was one of the more forceful proponents for improving the political estate of Baltimore Negroes, especially in the 4th District.

### THE 1958 PRIMARY

The machine, on the other hand, took steps to hold and attract Negro support, since the loss of the district for Pollack would end his power in the city and state. For the May 1958 primary, the machine fielded a slate of seven candidates for the legislature, including three Negroes: For the senate, J. Alvin Jones, member of the city Park Board, a veteran politician and a specialist in minority employment problems; for the house of delegates, Mrs. Irma Dixon, proprietor of a dress shop and a former schoolteacher and wife of a staunch Pollack supporter, and Arlington Phillips, a funeral director.

At least two of the white Pollack candidates for the house of delegates, if not selected specifically to appeal to Negroes, had displayed more than simple sympathy for the aspirations of the colored minority. Murray Abramson, an incumbent, had sponsored minimum-wage legislation and was assistant executive director of the Baltimore Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Incumbent Jerome Robinson, a lawyer, was also regarded by many Negroes as a friend; he had been secretary of a legislative commission studying medico-legal psychiatry from which had come progressive legislation dealing with sexual offenders.

The other regular candidates were Sol J. Friedman, a lawyer and an incumbent who had been active in broadening workmen's compensation laws, and Richard T. Rombro, also a lawyer.

Two Negroes ran for the house of delegates on the Democratic ticket as anti-Pollack independents. They were Mrs. Verda Welcome, a housewife, civic worker, and former schoolteacher, and Truly Hatchett, an incumbent who had won his nomination in 1954 as an independent.

The Republicans offered a full slate of Negroes in the primary, including Harry Cole, seeking re-election to the state senate, and Emory Cole, seeking re-election to the house of delegates.

The apparent plan of the Pollack organization was to attract Negro voters to support the entire regular Democratic ticket by using the three Negro candidates as bait. In this way four white inner-organization men would be re-elected to the lower house. More important, all those elected—white and Negro—would be beholden to the organization. Of central concern to the Pollack forces was the senate seat that had been held for nearly four years by Republican Harry Cole. Since only one senate seat is allotted to the district, the senator has considerable power in all the affairs of the state, including patronage.

All but one of the Pollack-fielded candidates won in the Democratic primary. The victorious anti-Pollack Democrat was Mrs. Welcome, who defeated Arlington Phillips. The primary over, Mrs. Welcome left on a six-week tour of Europe. The other candidates marked time.

---



### FORMING A COALITION

During the primary *ad hoc* groups—white and colored, Republican and Democratic—had helped various candidates. One such group, the Welcome Advisory Committee, had helped Mrs. Welcome. It was composed both of persons interested in her alone and of persons who worked for her and other candidates. For instance, Senator Harry Cole, the Republican incumbent, was a member. When Cole and Mrs. Welcome were asked if they would continue “working together,” despite the difference in their party affiliations, in the event that both won in the primary, neither candidate answered unequivocally. Cole was the more outspoken in pointing out the desirability of their continued “united action” through to election day. Some of Mrs. Welcome’s supporters stated quite plainly, however, that although they were opposed to the Pollack machine, they could not bring themselves to support non-Democrats. This sentiment was general among Democrats. In other words, there was at this time no blueprint for a bipartisan or an all-Negro coalition to work against the Pollack organization in the 4th District. The emphasis by Negroes was on getting more recognition and representation for their racial group.

Mrs. Welcome’s success on the Democratic ticket, although she ran without the blessing of the Pollack machine or any outside financial sponsor, stimulated thinking about a coalition. Many asked, “If Cole could win against Pollack in 1954 and if Mrs. Welcome could succeed in the 1958 primary, why can’t an entire anti-Pollack slate win in the November elections?” Encouraging and supporting this view was the high registration of Negroes and the known dissatisfaction with the Pollack organization of many people outside the Negro community.

The idea of a coalition was not favorably received at first. Most of the Negro candidates and their advisers were not ready to disavow or jeopardize their party status by running on a bipartisan or nonpartisan ticket. Stimulating interest in the coalition idea took considerable selling by several persons, with Senator Harry Cole foremost among them.

Upon Mrs. Welcome’s return to the city about July 1, those who later became coalition sponsors decided that the way to obtain more and better representation for Negroes was by defeating the Pollack machine and replacing it with what Mrs. Welcome called a “people-centered” leadership—a leadership “which measures progress in the city and state as being greater than the fortunes of any one party or organization.” The pro-coalition forces decided to support an anti-Pollack ticket which would oppose both white and colored candidates who were considered too beholden to the Pollack machine. Such a ticket would include both Republicans and Democrats, regardless of their race or religion.

### THE COALITION BECOMES ALL COLORED

In order to have an anti-Pollack ticket of whites and Negroes with any chance of winning an election, it seemed necessary to attract some white Pollack men away from the Pollack organization. But no Pollack men were found

willing to repudiate their connections. Those already in office and seeking re-election owed their political lives to Pollack; aspirants for office wanted to be part of a combination with the proven ability and material resources to win. In view of the Baltimore racial pattern, the white individuals approached considered it unrealistic for a white candidate of substance to run with Negroes against white leadership. As one white political veteran put it to this writer, such an alliance would be "a kiss of death, both politically and in other ways."

Senator Cole believed that one white Pollack follower, Maurice J. Soypher, would enter the race for the state senatorship, by petition, in opposition to the machine candidate, but Soypher was bartered out of competition and "taken care of" by Pollack. When death created a 5th District vacancy on the city council, the machine, through its control of the council, switched a 4th District councilman, Solomon Liss, to the 5th District seat and then seated the challenging Soypher as councilman from the 4th. Soypher immediately withdrew from the anti-Pollack race. Editorials condemned the manipulations by Pollack, but the act was done; Pollack's power was again revealed.

Senator Cole also attempted to persuade other white Pollack men to turn against their boss and join an anti-Pollack ticket, but to no avail. An article in the *Evening Sun* reported the following from Cole:

Senator Cole denied that he had planned to build an all-Negro machine. This year's slate, he said, was just a temporary expedient to enable the district to break the loosening grip of James H. Pollack. . . . He said, for example, that he would take Delegate Jerome Robinson "tomorrow" if Mr. Robinson would disavow Mr. Pollack.

Finding no white aspirants willing to oppose Pollack, interested Negroes decided that if there were to be an anti-Pollack coalition, it would have to be made up entirely of Negroes. Many persons still expressed fear of an all-Negro ticket; some others deplored the coalition "as a matter of principle," seeing in it the twin evils of self-segregation and a demand for representation solely on the basis of race. But those bent on weakening or defeating Pollack or in securing more recognition for Negroes won, and the coalition ticket—all-Negro—was born.

By party affiliation, the coalition ticket was composed of five Republicans, one for the senate and four for the house of delegates; one independent Democrat, for the house of delegates; and one regular pro-Pollack Democrat, for the house of delegates. On paper, the coalition ticket was all-Negro and bipartisan. It contained not only anti-Pollack candidates but also one Pollack-supported candidate, Mrs. Irma Dixon. The predominance of Republicans, however, was evident. The Pollack slate contained only five candidates for the six positions in the house of delegates. The sixth spot was left open for Mrs. Welcome if she had ultimately decided to go along with the regulars. The coalition and Pollack-Democratic candidates were:

#### SENATE

##### *Pollack-Democratic*

J. Alvin Jones

##### *Coalition*

Harry Cole (R)

## HOUSE OF DELEGATES

*Pollack-Democratic*

Murray Abramson  
 Irma G. Dixon  
 Sol J. Friedman  
 Jerome Robinson  
 Richard T. Rombro

*Coalition*

Emory Cole (R)  
 Howard Dixon (R)  
 Dan Spaulding (R)  
 Verda Welcome (D)  
 Bertha Winston (R)  
 Irma G. Dixon (D)

**A SUMMIT MEETING**

The coalition ticket was unveiled publicly in September during a "summit meeting of Maryland's colored leadership," sponsored by a state-wide committee, the brain child of the president of the *Afro-American*, Carl Murphy. The conference brought together on the campus of Morgan State College more than 300 delegates from sixty communities to discuss and decide upon a strategy for advancing Negroes politically and economically. Although the theme of the conference was very broad, a great deal of attention centered upon the contest in the 4th District, and the political advantage of an all-Negro ticket was much discussed. Local and out-of-town speakers condemned boss control and advocated a united attempt by the Negroes of the 4th District to eliminate bossism.

One of the principal backers of the coalition, the Reverend J. Timothy Boddie, pastor of New Shiloh Baptist Church and director of The Church Crusade for Freedom, told the summit meeting "we must shelve our individual differences . . . we must wipe out all division lines . . . and elect an all-colored slate in the 4th District. We must have unity, unity, unity, without which, nothing." In the first public advocacy of the coalition for its racial advantage, Reverend Boddie attempted to exonerate the all-Negro ticket from charges of improper motives because of its racial composition by calling attention to the "fact and reality" of political behavior. Drawing on earlier statements, he said:

There is nothing else we can do if we are going to match fact and reality. We may be charged with extreme racism for advocating this procedure, but we are justified in doing this as long as our Jewish friends elect Jews, Italians elect Italians, and other racial groups project their own . . . our white friends in these five districts [of Baltimore] draw the color line and elect no colored people to the legislature. They have never elected a colored person in all history and from all indications, of themselves, never will.

**THE CHARGE OF SELF-SEGREGATION**

As expected, the coalition found its strongest selling points to be its challenge to bossism and its agitation for increased recognition and representation for Negroes in the state's political life. But the coalition also found itself very much on the defensive.

The inclusion of Mrs. Irma Dixon put the coalition in the difficult position of explaining how it could be honestly anti-Pollack and at the same time sponsor an avowed Pollack candidate. While the leadership explained that she was new in politics, not heavily indebted to the machine, and a likely prospect for

conversion, her presence confused coalition supporters and became a source of embarrassment. The coalition also found it difficult to answer the charge that the whole movement was nothing more than an attempt by the minor Republican party to capture office through a tie-up with disgruntled Democrats.

But by far the most difficult accusations to counter were the taunts that "a vote for the coalition will be a vote for segregation." The coalition's opposition and other citizens asked "How can they agitate for integration one day and contend for a segregated ticket the next day?" During the course of the campaign, radio and newspaper commentators—most often critically—labeled the coalition the "Negro party." Here again the endorsement of Mrs. Dixon caused embarrassment. Her presence lent support to charges of "self-segregation." She was the only Negro among the Pollack candidates for the house of delegates, and she was the only regular Democrat among the coalition candidates. What is more, Mrs. Dixon repudiated coalition support in every public appearance and called the all-Negro ticket "an act of segregation in its worst form." In a public statement she spelled out the contentions against the coalition. She wrote:

I see no sense in all this ill-conceived coalition ticket which violates every principle of democratic American government that demands the election of only the best qualified candidates regardless of race or color.

The coalition leaders have chosen their candidates solely on the basis of color—which in itself is an act of segregation in its worst form.

Mrs. Dixon also stated that representation of all the segments of the population "will never be done by the election of a strictly racial ticket."

Other Pollack adherents echoed the charge of self-segregation into every nook of the Negro community. It was repeated in meeting after meeting, with all the ills of segregation being colorfully described and roundly condemned. This phase of the campaign had as its backdrop the years' long efforts of Negroes to abolish segregation and achieve integration in schools, parks, employment, the armed forces, and other areas.

### THE RACISM CHARGES

Some of the organization candidates expressed the view that the way for Negroes to obtain greater representation and political recognition was within the organization. Every ethnic group, they conceded privately, has supported its own at the polls; each needs a few agitators out stoking the fires of group aspiration. But, they said, it is bad politics and dangerous for a minority group to use race as the basis of an open, public campaign and attempt to put the demand for representation on a "power" basis.

Organization candidates publicly charged that the coalition was racist; in the words of one candidate: "Harry Cole wanted to be the Adam Clayton Powell of Baltimore." When they were excluded from church meetings and met a blackout in the *Afro-American*, they countered this effort to block them from Negro voters by holding "coffee klatches," organized by Irma Dixon, in private homes. The activities of the organization candidates were not reported; as far as the *Afro* was concerned there were only Negro candidates. It men-

tioned Irma and Howard Dixon, Negroes supported by the machine, only to denounce them. (On the other hand, while the leading dailies had long opposed Pollack, they could not bring themselves to support the coalition to defeat him.)

Other institutions in the Negro community were used politically with a freedom that machine candidates declared they found shocking. They resented the use of the Morgan State College campus as the site for the summit meeting which they saw as an effort to unify Negroes throughout the state behind the coalition ticket of the 4th District. White Pollack candidates also professed surprise at the extent of political commitment and involvement of Negro churches and churchmen—pointing out that “no rabbi could, as the Negro ministers did, pour money from collection plates directly into the coalition campaign fund.”

In emphasizing its segregation charges, the Pollack forces widely distributed a biting cartoon lambasting the coalition and picturing Carl Murphy, influential editor of the *Afro-American* and moving spirit of the coalition, as agitating for “integration” most of the time but now insisting on an all-colored ticket. One half of the cartoon showed Mr. Murphy, looking respectable in top hat and tails, arguing with Uncle Sam in these words:

We must have complete integration in the schools, Down with Faubusism in a democracy.

The other half showed him in a bowler, labeled “Boss,” haranguing a coalition audience, including the candidates:

But we want segregation in politics—such as an all-colored coalition ticket. Down with Democracy in Maryland.

Over the cartoon was the caption: “This Is No Time for Double-Talk!”

One Pollack advertisement called on 4th District voters to “Vote Democratic for Baltimore’s only *integrated ticket* for the state legislature—the *only integrated ticket* in any district of Baltimore. . . .”

This attack on the coalition had wide appeal, and there were many non-Pollack Negroes who expounded the Pollack arguments even more vitriolically and convincingly than the machine’s followers.

#### **The Coalition Rebuts**

Coalition spokesmen answered by stating repeatedly that its objective was not to further segregation but rather to promote integration of the state legislature. The leaders explained that the 4th District was the only channel through which they could bring about such integration, since the majority party had never sponsored Negro candidates in other districts, and Negroes (in those districts) could not win office on their own votes alone. The coalition also pointed out that its members were supporting regular party candidates for several state-wide offices. In later advertisements, it asked: “What is the coalition ticket?” and answered:

The coalition ticket is the combination of Democratic and Republican candidates for election to the General Assembly of Maryland from the 4th District. There are candidates for the state senate and the house of delegates. The

coalition ticket is dedicated and committed to the proposition that uncontrolled service to the people is the first prerequisite for election to any office. It is their purpose, by binding themselves together as a team, to put an end to this political cancer. By doing so, we will be able to insure free elections and afford the people representation which puts satisfaction of their needs above all other considerations. This ticket is all colored by accident, in that white nominees refused and still refuse to disown Pollack.

Similar answers to the charges of "self-segregation" and "racism" also came from the independent Democratic candidate who was a member of the coalition, Mrs. Verda Welcome:

Because I am so dedicated to the "one world" idea and work with so many interracial groups, I took care to ascertain if the members of the coalition were motivated by any racial prejudice. I am satisfied that there are no anti-white sentiments in the coalition.

On our 1958 slate only Negroes are carried, because the potential white candidates (like many other persons in the 4th District) are afraid of the present district leadership and will not make a change until the coalition has demonstrated that it can win without the usual 4th District backing. Once the present stranglehold is broken, both whites and Negroes will be free to seek representation on merit.

The present political leadership of the city has no moral right to cry "race" when it has followed such a racial policy itself. In not a single district has a Negro been slated for office on the high grounds of democracy, altruism, and interracial good will. Even in the 4th District Negroes had to break through as independents in 1954, in order to win half a loaf in 1958. In the 5th District, with 26 percent Negroes, it has not occurred to any party leader to sponsor a Negro as a candidate for state legislature or city council—even when there was a recent council vacancy.

In response to the assertion that all segments of the district would not be represented by Negroes, Mrs. Welcome added:

Down the years, I have never questioned the ability, capacity, or integrity of white persons to represent me in public office. I believed that when they represented "all the people" well, they represented me well, too. I hold that Negroes can also represent "all the people," including their white constituents. . . .

Although coalition leaders may have begun by accepting an all-Negro ticket reluctantly, as the campaign wore on, consciously or unconsciously coalition literature and appeals tended to make a virtue of the racial composition of the ticket. The *Afro-American*, especially, fairly bristled with exhortations to Negroes to "elect all-colored," reminders that "it is to our own interest to elect representatives of our own group," and denunciations of Irma Dixon on the ground that the "interest of her people should rise above any commitment to her party and by all means to Jack Pollack." And among themselves, the more "race-conscious" participants in the coalition justified an all-Negro ticket on grounds of efficacy and political practicability. They believed, as one coalition leader said, that the all-Negro composition "will appeal to the rank-and-

file masses of our people who want to see us sticking together and doing something."

### THE CHARGE OF REPUBLICAN DOMINATION

Another opposition weapon was the charge that the coalition was simply a trick of the Republican party—since the GOP had little chance of winning an election on its own, it was attempting to win through the coalition. This accusation was undergirded by the fact that five of the coalition candidates were Republican. Moreover, these candidates (except for Senator Cole) were not known as dominant, colorful personalities in the district, although they were all "good, solid citizens." Indeed, except for Senator Cole and Mrs. Welcome, and the latter mostly socially, none of the coalition candidates was a headline maker. As individuals, the Republicans running for the lower house did not help the coalition; as party representatives, they belonged to the wrong party.

At the top of the respective tickets, Pollack Democrats were again in a preferred position in contrast to the Republicans and the Republican-dominated coalition. Because of what was styled "the Congressional record" of the Republican candidate for governor, former Congressman James P. Devereux, Negroes were "cold on him." Although coalition Republicans, like many other Negroes, supported Republican Senator J. Glenn Beall for re-election, they felt handicapped in their appeal to the public because of their gubernatorial candidate. As it turned out, many voted for J. Millard Tawes, the Democratic nominee for governor.<sup>6</sup>

The coalition did not exert much effort answering this accusation, but campaign workers found much sentiment against the ticket because of its Republican coloration. Many Negroes said they would not support the coalition and its Republicans "because we have been out of work three months and it is the Republicans who always bring depression." Some voters with such opinions had been or were unemployed.

The coalition spokesmen, backers and candidates, contended that defeat of the Pollack forces would bring benefits of jobs, recognition, and representation to Negroes. They pointed out that "only the crumbs from the boss's table" had been given to Negroes in the past. They listed office after office and commission after commission to show the absence of Negroes.

In counterattack, the Pollack spokesmen asked the voters: "What have these members of the coalition ever done for you?" They attempted to arouse large groups of Negroes against Senator Cole because "you never see him having a drink with you in the Sphinx Club or anywhere else on Pennsylvania Avenue." Cole was further accused of securing white-collar positions only for his "upper-class friends." Mrs. Welcome was painted as "not [being] aware of the problems of the people," of being "far removed," and of spending "most of her time with her white friends downtown." Then it was asked: "How can she [Mrs. Welcome] know your problems skipping all over Europe?"

Against this picture of the coalition, the machine boasted of the benefits the

<sup>6</sup> Tawes defeated Devereux in the 4th District, 20,332 to 8,266. Four years earlier, the Republican candidate, Theodore R. McKeldin, had defeated the Democrat, Harry C. Byrd, 20,970 to 8,157.

Democratic party and the Pollack leadership had brought to Negroes. It appealed: "Vote for the party of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Harry S. Truman. End unemployment! Bring back prosperity and decent living wages. . . ."

The same appeal, under the heading of "Know the Truth," detailed "some of the things your 4th District Democrats have done for colored citizens." This list asserted that 4th District Democrats had:

1. Led the fight for integration and for the elimination of all forms of "Jim Crowism."
2. Fought for Fair Employment Practice Acts on the national, state, and local levels.
3. Won funds for important improvements at Morgan State College and Coppin State Teachers College [both predominantly Negro institutions].
4. Helped enormously to create more playgrounds in every section of the city . . . to combat juvenile delinquency and to provide healthful recreation.
5. Taken vigorous action to strengthen zoning laws . . . to protect residential districts from industrial encroachment.
6. Supported and helped elect the first colored Democrat to the city council.
7. Awarded "the first four-year scholarship to the Johns Hopkins University ever given to a colored student" and "the first four-year scholarship to the Maryland Institute of Art."
8. Enabled many leading and outstanding colored citizens to be appointed to important public offices and paved the way for more and more colored employees in all branches of city government.

The Pollack organization also circulated facsimiles of letters that it had received from key Negro citizens—letters requesting help from Pollack or one of his close allies or thanking him for a favor already rendered. Some of the signatures were of men active in the coalition movement. One was from the president of the Baltimore chapter of the NAACP. In an advertisement the organization also listed the names of those Negro citizens, including the editor of the *Afro-American*, from whom it "had received the highest praise, telegrams of appreciation, letters, plaques, and special awards. . . ."

The Pollack forces also built up frustration and confusion with the question "What can a few independents do in Annapolis?" One Pollack candidate was heard to say that the nonmachine Negroes, if they won, would be "an island of color in a sea of whiteness."

#### THE IMAGE OF AN INVINCIBLE POLLACK

Campaign reaction showed the coalition that the popular image of Pollack was an image of invincibility. Pollack's money and his organization were seen as "too much" for the coalition or any other challenger.

The truth is that no one believes Pollack is invincible, not even his closest followers. But political veterans agree that he is "almost invincible" because of the financial resources available to him and because of his efficient organization—an organization which is reportedly put together and controlled like a well-run business.



The Trenton Club, the outward and visible sign of Pollack's power, officially reported receipts of \$10,000 to its campaign treasury and expenditure of the same amount. Where the coalition employed one paid worker, the Pollack organization employed four or more; where the coalition paid a worker \$10 for a 13-hour day (on election day), the Pollack workers reportedly drew \$15 for a six-hour day, or \$30 for a full day. The coalition was always losing workers, on a pure bargain basis. One coalition captain was offered \$1000 in cash to divert her campaigning from coalition candidates.

Compared with potential Pollack contributors—contractors and others doing business with the city and state—the coalition was at a great financial disadvantage; it had no such source of large contributions.<sup>7</sup> The financial power of the machine, what some called “the endless flow of money,” contrasted with the inadequate resources of the coalition and proved to be a most potent argument against the coalition.

The image of Pollack was also sustained by the high esteem in which he is generally held as a man who knows how to build and operate a machine, who can press buttons and cause things to happen, and who has many people obligated to him, although he holds no office. The Pollack machine had been functioning with success for over a quarter of a century. It had won district victory after district victory; it had helped significantly to assure Democratic majorities in the state legislature and the city council, and it had played a major part in keeping Democrats in the mayoralty, the governorship, and Congress most of the time. One of the great organizational assets of the Pollack machine, therefore, was its reservoir of experienced political workers and supporters who, through patronage, have fared well at Pollack's hands. They worked, they contributed, they helped to keep the Pollack image aglow. Throughout the district they represented Pollack as victory, all else as defeat.

#### THE COALITION: TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE

The members of the coalition had more than three months from the May primary in which to meet the strengths of the Pollack organization, but it was not until September that the decision was made to function as a coalition. Thus, when candidates should have been campaigning according to a studied plan, they were devoting their time to planning, each more or less for himself alone.

On paper and in assertions, there was a coalition, but the members of the group did not thoroughly coalesce; they were not obsessed with the idea and spirit of coalition; they did not fanatically believe in the rightness of “the cause.” I attended several campaign meetings at which two members of the coalition spoke without saying a single word to promote the ticket as a whole. Each candidate merely boosted his own candidacy.

It had been agreed within the coalition that each member would be expected to do everything possible to win, but it was not anticipated that anyone would campaign ignoring his association with the movement. This failure to “sell”

<sup>7</sup> According to official figures, the campaign cost the Pollack candidates \$15,296; the losers spent \$12,540. The coalition, as an organization, spent \$3,982.72.

the virtues of the coalition at all times left many voters confused as to whether they should vote the straight coalition ticket or not.

### THE VOTER CHALLENGES

The Pollack forces took a number of other steps to show their strength against the coalition. After the registration of new voters had closed, with an estimated 7000 more Negroes than whites registered in the 4th District, Pollack moved. Representatives of the organization challenged 1751 registrants, expected to be coalition supporters, on nonresidence and other grounds. The coalition countered by challenging 637 registrants in Pollack areas.

The election laws provide for the automatic removal of challenged voters who do not reply to the notice of challenge mailed them by the Board of Supervisors of Elections. Altogether, 1726 persons thereby lost their right to vote in the November election: 1211 on challenges by the Pollack forces and 515 on challenges by the coalition.

Both sides aroused a good deal of popular criticism because of the unprecedented number of challenges and because many persons who should not have been challenged were compelled to lose time from work to preserve their right to vote. The hearing on the challenges lasted fifteen hours. At its conclusion, the chairman of the Board of Supervisors of Elections, Charles A. Dorsey, issued this statement: "During the course of today's proceedings, we have seen innocent, legitimate voters who have had to make sacrifices of time and money, who have been harassed and embarrassed to defend their right to vote, when a reasonable investigation could have shown that they should not have been challenged." The net benefit was conceded to the Pollack machine, however, because its chances were enhanced by the reduction of coalition supporters, especially Negro Republicans, who, the Pollack forces reasoned, were certain to vote against their candidates.

Notwithstanding the challenges, the registered voters in the 4th District showed 26,924 Negroes to 22,929 whites, according to computations by the *Afro-American*.

In addition to meeting the Pollack voter challenge, the coalition attempted to turn this issue to its own advantage. Coalition speakers sought to arouse sentiment against Pollack and Pollack men by saying that they had "forced a Negro woman to do their dirty work" while they remained in the background. In the formal hearings before the Supervisors of Elections, it was noted, a Negro woman, Mrs. Dixon, preferred the charges on behalf of the Pollack machine; it was also pointed out that the undelivered letters which formed the basis of Mrs. Dixon's allegations were mailed in envelopes with Pollack's return address.

The *Afro-American* joined the attack. A cartoon showed Mrs. Dixon as a martian-looking "Lady Horatius at the bridge," dressed in armor, facing the challenged voters with a spear labeled "challenges." Far to the rear, protected by a fence, were the four white Pollack candidates. Also much in the rear was the artist's image of Pollack, pulling the strings attached to Mrs. Dixon. Standing over Pollack, humbly fanning him, was senatorial candidate Jones. In an adjoining editorial, the *Afro-American* said:

---

So we have the rather ungallant situation of Mr. Pollack and his legislative slate of five men—Rombro, Robinson, Jones, Abramson, and Friedman—hiding behind a woman's skirt.

If Pollack leaned on Mrs. Dixon, the coalition leaned on Hyman Pressman, a white, anti-Pollack attorney who is almost an institution in Baltimore. It was Pressman who, helping Harry Cole at the challenge hearing, said: "I want the record to show that these letters are returnable to James H. Pollack—and not to Mrs. Irma Dixon."

#### LABOR DESERTS COLE

The hand of Pollack was also seen in the behavior of the Baltimore Council of AFL-CIO unions. On September 11, the 62-member council endorsed Senator Cole over Jones, the Pollack machine candidate. One week later, the council reversed itself "by decisive margins," according to the *Sun*, and decided to endorse Jones instead of Cole.

Labor had presumably supported Cole on his record, but pressures from the state body (the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO) and from Pollack cohorts resulted in an about-face. According to the *Sun*, at the September 18 meeting, the president of the Maryland-District of Columbia organization promised that "Jones would go down the line in support of pro-labor legislation," while one Negro delegate, pressing for Jones, said of Senator Cole, "The ordinary people can't reach him."

Some politicians believe that the Pollack machine had threatened that no pro-labor legislation would be passed by the next state legislature if the labor council did not endorse Jones.

#### THE RESIGNATION OF COLE'S MANAGER

The Pollack forces took another swing at the coalition and especially its leader, Senator Cole, when it attacked Cole's campaign manager, Samuel T. Daniels, for participating in partisan politics while employed as executive secretary of a state agency, the Maryland Commission on Interracial Problems and Relations. There is no "little Hatch Act" in Maryland, and state and city employees customarily indulge in political activity. In this case, however, in mid-October Daniels was forced by his agency to withdraw from the coalition and from Cole's campaign.

There were also threats that Daniels would be forced out of his job, even if it meant abolishing the commission. Bernard S. Melnicove, the former state senator whom Cole had defeated in 1954, wrote that Daniels' political activity "calls either for a prompt dissolution of the commission or rededication of its members to carry out its worthy objectives. . . ."

Daniels signed an agreement to abstain from politics, and many other Negroes reportedly became more cautious and less active in the coalition, if they or any relatives were employed by the state or city. This divorce of Daniels from the anti-Pollack campaign left the campaign without its most efficient and experienced leader.

### THE SAMPLE DEMOCRATIC BALLOT

During the early stages of the campaign, the Pollack organization tried to entice Mrs. Welcome away from the coalition. Pollack supporters called her, advising her to see Mr. Pollack and assuring her that he was not angry because she had run as an independent. Mrs. Welcome interpreted these gestures as a plan to have her appear as seeking forgiveness or asking for help. She always replied that she would be "willing to see Mr. Pollack, if he wants to see me."

"Mrs. Welcome Vexes Party" appeared as a headline in the *Sun*, October 12, 1958. The accompanying article said, in part:

Democrats have in the person of Mrs. Verda Welcome, a candidate who refuses to go along with the rest of her ticket.

They are in a dilemma as to just what to do about her and may wind up by simply leaving her name off sample ballots to be distributed just before the November 4 general election.

The situation has both district and state-wide Democratic leaders worried, so worried in fact that they called Mrs. Welcome to an emergency meeting at party headquarters in the Hotel Emerson Friday night.

Lawrence B. Fenneman, general chairman of the Democratic campaign, presided.

He and other leaders reportedly asked Mrs. Welcome to go along with the regular district ticket.

Mrs. Welcome said last night she told Mr. Fenneman she considered herself a Democrat and a member of the Democratic ticket because "I won my place in the primary."

Mrs. Welcome said she made it plain, however, that she was sticking by the coalition and reported she told the Democrats assembled "that it was ridiculous to even ask me" to give it up.

When asked last night whether she expected her name to be included in sample ballots, she remarked that she was not accepted by the organization for the primary "so why should I expect my name to be on the sample ballots for the general election?"

When the sample ballot appeared, the name and position (12B) of Mrs. Welcome, the independent Democratic candidate running as part of the coalition, were omitted. Political circles believed that never before had the local Democratic organization refused to "carry" a Democrat who had won in the primary. Mrs. Welcome supported the Democratic candidate for governor but did not make peace with Pollack.

### "RACE PRIDE," WOMEN, AND CHILDREN

In an attempt to balance the Pollack advantage, the coalition employed "race pride" and used women, the church, and children. Except for children, none of these was a new device, but attempts were made to use them more fully and effectively than had usually been the case.

---

Appeals were made to Negroes on the basis of doing "your duty to the race," making "a contribution to your children's future," "doing our part in Baltimore for what our brothers cannot do in Little Rock or South Africa." Negroes were challenged to think and act for themselves without asking Mr. Charley's (the white powers-that-be) permission or support. Some leaders had such faith in the Negro reaction to the coalition that they believed Mrs. Dixon's repudiation would attract rank-and-file support for the all-colored ticket and turn Negro voters against Mrs. Dixon.

Some 1000 women volunteers who had been organized into "Woman Power," in June 1958, partly to promote registration and partly to insure the election of all three Negro women candidates, later also worked for the coalition. Under the guidance of Mrs. Victorine Adams and Mrs. Ethel Rich, both owners of their own businesses and both Democrats, these women registered hundreds of new voters, held scores of "house parties," and rented a voting machine and drove it in a truck from neighborhood to neighborhood to show new voters how to operate it correctly. "Woman Power" issued a flood of printed matter, made thousands of telephone calls, and furnished many of the volunteers for election day. They did everything from providing snacks for late workers to contributing money.

Another group, "Women for Welcome," under the leadership of Mrs. Edith P. Hill, a businesswoman, worked specifically for Mrs. Welcome. These women raised their own money, bought thousands of illustrated "Welcome" buttons and match books, held meetings, and sponsored a score of other vote-getting projects.

All the candidates spent many hours each day meeting and greeting the usual church and neighborhood groups, PTA's, and political clubs; others went into taverns and barbershops. All of them bought some radio time and advertising in neighborhood weeklies; some advertised in the daily papers, singly or jointly.

The most spectacular public appeal was that of Mrs. Welcome who, it should be noted, had more free time than the other candidates. She decorated her automobile, labeling it "the Welcome Wagon," fitted it with a loud-speaker, made recordings and, so equipped, carried her campaign to every Negro section of the district. She spoke on sidewalks and visited homes which the residents said no politician had ever entered before. Some people were suspicious at first, some did not want their ghettoed privacy violated, but most expressed appreciation that they were "thought enough of" to inspire a personal visit.

The Welcome Wagon became an attraction for children wherever it stopped. Mrs. Welcome and her workers gave the children candy, buttons, and printed paper hats, and sent them home with messages to their parents or went to their homes with them. Other candidates also used newsboys and neighborhood children to carry their messages.

Many churches permitted coalition candidates to address their congregations or to hold mass meetings in their auditoriums. Others distributed campaign literature. Most important of all, 162 ministers answered the call of the coal-

tion to help them as an organized group, to clarify the issues of the campaign, and to use their influence on behalf of the movement.

### THE POLLACK CAMPAIGN AMONG WHITE VOTERS

The campaign so far described was centered in the Negro communities of the 4th District. Among coalition candidates, only Mrs. Welcome ventured into the "upper end" of the district where the electorate was predominantly white. On the other hand, the Pollack forces campaigned in these parts "more than ever before." Jack Pollack does not usually have to do a great deal of campaigning among the white voters. In addition to the heavy Democratic registration, his years in control have virtually assured him about 10,000 votes. This had meant that, in recent years, Pollack's real fight has been to hold a slight margin of votes in each Negro precinct.

In 1958, it seemed that the heat of the coalition campaign and the opportunity it gave anti-Pollack voters to register protest against him caused Pollack to intensify his campaign in white areas, especially in the pockets of non-Jewish residents. As one Pollack supporter commented "Jack knew he had to win this one."

Newspaper and radio coverage of the coalition challenge made the composition of the coalition known city-wide, and among white residents there was much discussion—some fear, some anger, some regret, some understanding approval. "Friends of the Negro," sometimes called "the people of good will," viewed the coalition with alarm, feeling that it would stir up racial antagonism. One such friend, very active on the city's interracial front, called the movement "the worst thing that Negroes have ever done."

An anti-Pollack columnist observed in the *News-Post* that the coalition "raises a problem even more troublous than Pollack." Louis Azrael, the columnist, continued: "The backers of this racist group may argue they are merely copying Pollack's techniques. But this is an admission that they are fighting for dominance, not for fairness, not for the best government for all." Then he called upon all those "who abhor the injection of un-American factors in our elections" to vote for individuals who are "best qualified, regardless of which ticket they are on."

I was not present at any of the meetings in the "upper end" of the district, but I learned from white informants and from members of the advisory committees what took place at these meetings. Political wisdom led the Pollack forces to adopt two campaign approaches, one for purely white audiences where all the Pollack speakers were also white and another for Negro audiences or whenever Negroes were present.

White groups were told how well they had fared under Pollack leadership and Pollack Democrats. They were reminded of the many jobs held by district residents because of the Pollack-supported men in the United States Congress, the state legislature, and the city council. They were urged to continue backing the party of Roosevelt and Truman and not to permit the Republicans to usurp power by way of the coalition. The whites were also told that the election of the coalition ticket would mean that "only part of the district" would be

represented in the legislature and that the white people would have no representation.

Among white voters, the questions, "Shall we exchange a white for a Negro boss?" or "Do you want to see the city taken over by Negroes?", were raised frequently, even if subtly. And the speaker usually answered them by painting a frightening picture of what would happen to Baltimore "under a Negro boss with a Negro machine."

Pictures of a Negro "boss" dominating and running the district in the interest of Negroes were drawn by words and cartoons. Many references were made to "the little man on Eutaw Street," referring to Carl Murphy of the *Afro-American*, who was given much credit for stimulating the "coalition" idea. Pollack spokesmen even asked, "What's the percentage in exchanging one boss for another?"

Money also played an unusual part in the white districts. More workers were used than was customary. More money was spent to insure white support. More money was given to white activists who claimed they knew "a Negro" or "Negroes" who could swing some Negro votes.

White 4th District voters were not taken for granted by the Pollack machine. The drive among them was "intensive, thorough and awe-inspiring, as it had never, or seldom, been before," according to the old political hands.

### MRS. WELCOME CAMPAIGNS AMONG THE WHITES

One member of the coalition seriously took her campaign to the "upper end" of the district—the white neighborhoods. About ten days before the election, Mrs. Welcome drove her decorated loud-speaker truck into the very block in which Pollack lived. She went from house to house, introducing herself and asking for support. Mrs. Welcome had worked out a direct approach. As each householder opened her door, she said:

I am Verda Welcome. I am a candidate for the state legislature from this district. I am a Democrat. I feel myself a candidate of the entire Fourth District, and when I am elected, I shall represent all the people of the Fourth District.

Mrs. Welcome continued that there were problems of government that women particularly could help to solve and that, when elected, she would attempt especially to represent the feminine viewpoint in politics.

Not many of her advisers thought it wise, or considered it a good investment of time or money, for Mrs. Welcome to campaign in the "upper part" of the district, but Mrs. Welcome explained that she did not want to "write off" the white voters. She later said that the white residents at home (mostly women) received her warmly. "They listened to me, they asked me questions, and not a single person turned me down," she reported. Mrs. Welcome also received several veiled promises of support.

### THE LAST STRETCH

By the time the coalition campaign reached its climax the 4th District had been placarded, circularized, and loud-spoken to from every direction. The people had been propagandized or educated, depending on one's point of view.

Pollack workers called on Negro precinct workers in the poorer areas, those who were pro-coalition or uncertain, with a new line. This is the way it went:

We know Senator Cole and the coalition have it all "sewed up." All we ask you to do is get us ten people who will vote for our candidates, so that our side won't look too bad. That won't hurt the coalition and you can make \$15 . . . \$20 . . . or \$30.

Some Negroes turned down this proposition, but others accepted, thinking that "getting ten votes" for the opposition would not hurt the coalition. But the Pollack machine was working to limit the coalition majority in the Negro precincts, while exerting every effort to insure an overwhelming majority for Pollack candidates in white neighborhoods.

All that was said and done by the coalition was underscored in the headlines, editorials, and cartoons of the *Afro-American*. Its news columns and editorial pages were *verboden* to the coalition's opponents, while no effort was spared to work up enthusiasm among readers for the all-colored slate. An editorial advised 4th District voters to "take the day off" since "the 4th District happens to be the only district in the city in which colored voters have registered in such numbers as to put up their own ticket." Still another editorial urged "let's make a clean sweep Tuesday." "Let's not lynch ourselves," warned another editorial which called upon Negro voters to cast their ballots on election day not only for the coalition candidates but also for aspirants for Congress and the governorship. The *Afro-American* split its support for the top national and state-wide offices and backed Republican J. Glenn Beall for re-election as United States Senator and Democrat J. Millard Tawes for election as governor. For the Congressional seats its support went largely to Democrats, most of whom were up for re-election.

On October 28, the *Afro* editorial took a hard line against organization Democrats in the 4th District:

If you live in the 4th District, vote the coalition ticket for members of the legislature.

For state senator—Harry A. Cole.

For house of delegates—Bertha Winston, Verda Welcome, Irma Dixon, Dan Spaulding, Howard Dixon and Emory Cole.

Be sure you have written down the list of persons for whom you will vote before you leave home. Get a coalition sample ballot to take to the polls with you.

Remember, there are two Coles and two Dixons on the ticket—vote for both of them.

We want to make a clean sweep on Tuesday if we are to defeat the Pollack machine.

In 1954 we had 47% of the vote in the district, but we clipped them by taking 3 out of 7 places in the legislative ticket.



Next Tuesday, with 54% of the registered vote, we should sting the bosses quite hard.

LET'S SWEEP OUT THE POLLACK CROWD, all of it, in the 4th District, and put in the coalition ticket.

In 1954 we won by 37 votes only.

That's not margin enough.

Bosses and political machines always manage to skiver here and there on election day.

Machine operators deprived the Coles of 100 lawful votes in 1954. If they try it this year, let's put some of them in jail.

Judges, watchers, candidates, and their workers must put in 14 hours election day. The polls open at 6 and close at 7—let's be prepared for a hard day, in which we won't get tired or relax our vigilance.

Let's see there is no tampering with the voting machines. 14 "got out of order" in the 14th Ward alone in 1954. In all the rest of the district, only 4 machines got out of order.

Let's be on hand before the voting machines are opened. If you are workers or judges, that means 5:30 A.M.

If friends of Mr. Pollack seek to steal this election, we can make it impossible simply [by] turning out in overwhelming numbers and voting early. Mayor McKeldin polled 22,000 votes in the 4th District in 1954.

Let's put in Harry Cole and the whole coalition ticket this year and beat the McKeldin record. Let's give them 22,001 votes.

The voters have the broom in their hands. They can make a clean sweep.

Coalition members had won personal endorsements from the usual kinds of organizations, or failed to win endorsement on grounds other than membership in the coalition. The *Sun* endorsed Mrs. Welcome for the house of delegates. Governor Theodore R. McKeldin eloquently campaigned for Senator Cole on the radio and recorded a message for the sound truck. The governor called for "a thumping majority" for Cole, whom he described as "an able senator who has served all the people efficiently."

Negro ministers (some 162 of them) also preached sermons calling upon their people to join a "new crusade" and support the coalition. An Election Day Prayer written by the Reverend J. Timothy Boddie, was printed in the *Afro-American* and distributed. The prayer beseeched the Lord to:

Look with favor upon these candidates;

Bless each one of them—Harry Cole, Verda Welcome, Bertha Winston, Irma Dixon (for whose conversion we earnestly pray), Howard Dixon, Emory Cole, Dan Spaulding;

Grant them strength, determination, wisdom, and vision to work together for victory in our common cause;

Hear us, we pray, standing on the threshold of an election day, that we may do our best and acquit us like men;

In thy strong name we pray. Amen.

In the last issue of the *Afro* before election, Reverend Boddie stressed the need for racial unity and implied that Negroes supporting the machine would be traitors, "Thank God, the masses of the people in the 4th District will have no part of Judas or Judas' money. . . . The coalition ticket is right and just. It is time for us to elect our own."

On election day, several churches held sunrise services and their ministers led their congregations to the polling places. Those churches with bells arranged to have them rung every hour while the polls were open.

### RUMORS OF INTERMARRIAGE

But the *coup de grâce* against the coalition and its leader, Senator Cole, had been delivered during the twenty-four hours before the polls were opened. In the pattern of the celebrated roorback, a handbill was distributed to white Gentile homes, suggesting that a vote for Cole would be a vote for intermarriage. The *Sun* reported:

Over in the Hampden-Woodberry section . . . dodgers were distributed in that all-white area against Harry A. Cole, Negro Republican trying for a second term in the State Senate. . . . Senator Cole's complexion was darkened to a deep black on the dodger and that of J. Alvin Jones, Negro Democrat running against him, was lightened in an obvious attempt to disguise his race.

These dodgers seem to have disappeared by the day after the election, but on election day the *Evening Sun* added to the above report that "the circular implied that a vote for Mr. Cole was a vote for 'mixed marriage.'"

A number of white voters who had promised to support Senator Cole and had worked on his behalf called his headquarters the night before election and the following morning. They were worried. In turn, they had been called by other whites inquiring if it were true that Cole was "in favor of interracial marriage."

### ELECTION-DAY ACTIVITIES

On election day there were the usual interparty squabbles. By the sheer number of workers inside the polling places, the Pollack organization could turn on, or turn off, pressure on voters, especially uncertain and halting voters. Their experienced workers easily hoodwinked the fewer coalition neophytes. At one polling place, it was reported to me, the coalition watcher called the policeman on duty to prevent a rival worker from tampering with the voting machine. The policeman came. He reprimanded the overzealous worker. In about fifteen minutes, the officer was removed from that polling place and replaced.

In another polling station a voting machine was operated for more than an hour without the lever over the name of Harry Cole. It had been broken off. At several polling places, bobby pins or toothpicks were stuck under the lever over Mrs. Welcome's name.

At a number of corners where Morgan State College students of practical politics were working for the coalition, I found that unknown persons had delivered a message to them purporting to come from the coalition. The message directed the students, or at least one at each corner, to take a break for lunch or to rest. This "message" was intended further to decrease the number of canvassers working for the coalition.

---

The coalition fought back as well as it could, handicapped though it was by the thinness of its lines, the relative inexperience of most of its workers, and the difference in operation of those who felt they had a material stake to win or to preserve. Some coalition workers, nevertheless, did harangue as much as anyone else; some were as persistent in keeping their eyes on Pollack men as they themselves were eyed; others showed themselves able to "police" when and if needed. But the loose, untried coalition was no match for the Pollack machine.

The climax of the voting came when candid-camera photographers, reportedly working for the Pollack machine, were seen trying to photograph certain voters at the polls—allegedly to frighten some persons away from voting. The *Evening Sun* later reported that "the FBI began an investigation of reports of apparent attempts to intimidate voters by photographing them as they entered the polls in Baltimore's 4th Legislative District."

The organization also had extra workers in each Negro precinct. Some political veterans estimate that there were from forty to fifty Pollack workers in each such precinct. Some of these workers were overhead solemnly telling aged Negro voters that it would be "illegal to vote for an all-colored ticket because the Supreme Court has said that segregation is against the law."

### A DEMOCRATIC HURRICANE

The returns soon showed that the Pollack candidates had won six of the seven places in the state legislature, and that not a single Republican had been elected. The only anti-Pollack, pro-coalition victory was achieved by a Democrat, Mrs. Welcome.

Most surprising was the defeat of Senator Cole who, although a Republican, had won against a strong, white Pollack candidate in 1954 and was generally credited with having made a good record in the senate because of the bills he had introduced and the new employment opportunities he had opened to Negroes. It had been believed that Cole was the one non-Pollack candidate who could feel sure of election.

He carried all the Negro precincts by a 2 to 1 margin over Jones. As the coalition leader, Cole may have suffered, especially, from the racial animosities and fears the campaign stirred among white voters. In 1954 he had polled 10,508 votes in the predominantly white precincts to 3371 for his white Democratic opponent; in 1958 he received only 2157 votes in white neighborhoods to 8861 for Jones. But whether he was handicapped more by the racial composition of the coalition, the charges of self-segregation, and the last-minute scare about interracial marriage than by his Republicanism cannot be determined. In the main, whites voted against the coalition.

The *News-Post* in reporting the results of the 4th District said in its headline:

### POLLACK WHIPS COALITION IN HIS TOUGHEST BATTLE

The story by James P. Connolly, the *News-Post* political editor, continued:

Facing the political fight of his life, James H. (Jack) Pollack, 4th District Democratic leader and a storm center of city politics, yesterday won it handily.

Beating back a new and strong Republican rivalry which might have ended his day in the 4th District, Pollack elected his state senator and a slate of five other legislative candidates.

He also had some success in the adjoining 5th District, where he has established a strong foothold against the embattled Goodman-Kovens group, Democratic factional rivals.

Pollack's 4th District senatorial candidate J. Alvin Jones, retired the Republican incumbent, Senator Harry A. Cole.

If Pollack had been defeated in the 4th District he might have had to find his political future, if any, in the 5th—where he may have to find it anyway, in later years. . . .

The comparative election figures for the coalition and for Pollack show the pattern of the election returns. Two Negro women, one on the Pollack ticket (Mrs. Dixon) and the other on the coalition ticket (Mrs. Welcome), both registered Democrats, led in the number of votes received. These women, both new in seeking political office, nevertheless led the four white veteran office-holders. Coalition backing for Mrs. Dixon, although she repudiated it, may have given her an extra push. On the other hand, Mrs. Welcome, although anti-Pollack, undoubtedly was helped by being on the Democratic line. The women may have benefited also from the special campaign conducted by "Woman Power" to "Send Three Colored Women to Annapolis."

#### ELECTION RETURNS, 4TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT <sup>a</sup>

Office	Pollack-Democratic		Coalition	
Senator	Jones	14,530	Cole, H.	12,520
Delegate	Dixon, I.	16,810	Cole, E.	10,152
	Robinson	15,668	Welcome	16,141
	Abramson	15,621	Winston	9,547
	Friedman	15,552	Dixon, H.	9,373
	Rombro	13,808	Spaulding	9,210
Cumulative votes cast		91,989		66,943

<sup>a</sup> *Evening Sun*, November 5, 1958.

From the racial point of view, three Negroes had been elected to the state legislature, the same number sent to Annapolis in 1954. There was no gain and no loss, racially. Partywise, all those elected were Democrats, although one had run as an independent Democrat. From the standpoint of the Pollack machine, all Pollack candidates were elected, and all but one member of the coalition, including its leader, were defeated. All in all, the election was a striking victory for Pollack and a decisive defeat for the backers of an all-colored ticket. Instead of weakening Pollack, the election strengthened his machine.

## POST-ELECTION REACTIONS

The post-election reaction of the losing coalition candidates varied from statements of disgust because the majority voters had "lost a real opportunity," to quote one candidate, to the usual statements of politeness. Senator Cole also publicly gave assurance that "every loss is not a defeat. In this election we began to awaken in the people an awareness of their potential and the need for unity in its use. . . ."

Pollack celebrated at Democratic headquarters and on the radio. Usually a man of few public words, he lambasted those who had "dreamed up" the coalition and praised those who had supported "a really integrated ticket."

On November 6 the *Sun*, which had given much editorial attention to the 4th District fight, also gave its views on the final outcome:

The results show that the rank and file Negroes of the 4th District were not prepared to go along with a ticket primarily based on race. The failure of the all-Negro appeal leaves the Pollack machine stronger than ever. Only Mrs. Verda Welcome won an independent place in the district delegation, and her success may inspire the Negro leadership to try a different approach next time.

"What Happened?" the *Afro-American* asked in four-inch-high type, eight columns across the front page, following the election. This question has been repeated often since.

In a public address Carl Murphy, editor of the *Afro-American*, listed five "mistakes" of the Coalition:

*Mistake No. 1:* We failed to recognize by all the signs that this is a Democratic year. All over the nation the Republicans were defeated on November 4.

*Mistake No. 2:* We failed to take into account that the Fourth District colored voters had registered nearly 3 to 1 Democratic.

*Mistake No. 3:* Instead of five Republicans and two Democrats, we should have nominated five Democrats and two Republicans.

*Mistake No. 4:* Some of our candidates had no money to pay workers and no friends to put up money for them.

*Mistake No. 5:* Some of our candidates were hardworking people with neither the time nor the disposition to make public appearances and speeches all over the district, or go from door to door, barbershop to beauty parlor, grocery store to churches, introducing themselves, shaking hands, kissing babies, and asking fellow citizens to vote for them.

Some observers believed that the coalition was weakened by its failure to attract political leaders at the precinct level. These men shied away from an organization identified with Murphy and a group of ministers. Rank-and-file practical politicians, it was argued, would follow another politician but they were wary of leaders in ivory towers who "know nothing of politics."

Cole and the coalition were also seen as failing to evaluate the kind of obligation that a boss and his machine can accumulate among low-income, largely slum-dwelling voters. Down through the years numbers of Negroes had turned to Pollack politicians for favors and influence: jobs (even though small), fixing arrests, protection of "the numbers" and other illegal gambling,

and support for substantial programs, such as getting bills introduced in the legislature or appropriations passed for predominantly Negro institutions.

Too late Senator Cole and his key advisers came to believe that it would have been more politic to have supported Jerome Robinson, a white member of the house of delegates for twenty years, held in high esteem by the Negroes and whites, even without his consent. This, it came to be seen, "would have been playing the game in the Pollack manner—including one white person to help carry the Negro candidates to victory." His inclusion would have deflected charges of an "all-Negro" ticket, though it might not have freed the coalition from explaining the endorsement of a Pollack lieutenant.

Another factor to be considered in the outcome of the election might have been the number of potential coalition backers who did not choose to vote on November 4, 1958. A review of the figures show that, while 30,949 Negroes in the 4th District were registered and eligible to vote, only 16,312 actually voted, as near as it can be determined. In other words, 14,637, or 47 percent, stayed away from the polls. Since Harry Cole lost the senatorial race by about 2000 votes, Emory Cole polled over 10,000 votes, and three other coalition candidates polled just under 10,000 votes, there is room for speculation as to what the results might have been if substantially more Negroes had voted.

### CONCLUSION

Lack of real knowledge as to what the 4th District was ready for politically, lack of money and organization, lack of zeal for bipartisanship, and underestimation of the wiles and ways of a strong political boss may be pointed to as the major reasons for the failure of the all-colored coalition legislative ticket in Baltimore. Whether this was a case of losing the battle but not the war, only the future can tell; but even before the election there was speculation that Negroes would be given an increased voice and a larger role in 4th District politics—indeed, in Pollack politics. A faithful organization lieutenant told the writer on election night: "Pollack will support Chinese for office, if he finds that to be the way to keep his power."

---



## MEMBERS OF THE EAGLETON INSTITUTE OF POLITICS ADVISORY BOARD

*Dean Ruth M. Adams*, Douglass College  
*President Mason W. Gross*, Rutgers, The State University  
*Mrs. Francis Hopkins*, New Jersey League of Women Voters  
*Dr. Arthur Mangelsdorff*, Academy of Medicine of Northern  
New Jersey

## EAGLETON INSTITUTE OF POLITICS STAFF

*Donald G. Herzberg*, Executive Director  
*Paul Tillett*, Assistant Director  
*Donald H. Riddle*, Director of Special Projects  
*Mark Ferber*, Director of Undergraduate Activities  
*Sebastian de Grazia*, Director of Development

The Wells Phillips and Florence Peshine Eagleton Institute of Politics, established in 1954 at Douglass College of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, is a unique educational experiment. The Institute originated in the settled conviction of the donor that "the cultivation of civic responsibility and leadership among the American people in the field of practical political affairs is of vital and increasing importance to our state and nation." The Institute is a nonpartisan educational organization dedicated exclusively to the advancement of learning in the field of practical political affairs and government within the framework of the two-party system, and is especially concerned with the development of and education for responsible leadership in civic and governmental affairs. As one means to this objective, the Institute, in collaboration with the McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., has sponsored a program of case studies in practical politics.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

G. James Fleming is Professor of Political Science at Morgan State College, Baltimore, and is director of its Institute for Political Education. He is also a member of the Baltimore Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. For several years, Dr. Fleming was a newspaper editor; during World War II he was regional director of the President's Committee on Fair Employment Practice for the states of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware; and in 1949-1950 he was secretary for race relations of the American Friends Service Committee.

## CASES IN THE EAGLETON INSTITUTE SERIES

THE LITTLE ROCK RECALL ELECTION by Henry M. Alexander.

THE POLITICS OF REAPPORTIONMENT IN WASHINGTON STATE by Gordon E. Baker.

THE RIVERSIDE DEMOCRATS by Donald C. Blaisdell.

THE RISE OF THE DEMOCRATIC CLUBS IN CALIFORNIA by Francis Carney.

CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGN: MAINE ELECTS A DEMOCRAT by John C. Donovan.

AN ALL-NEGRO TICKET IN BALTIMORE by G. James Fleming.

A UNIVERSITY IN THE WEB OF POLITICS by Samuel Halperin.

MINORITY POLITICS IN BLACK BELT ALABAMA by Charles V. Hamilton.

THE PURGE THAT FAILED: TAMMANY v. POWELL by David Hapgood.

NONPARTISAN ELECTION: A POLITICAL ILLUSION? by Marvin A. Harder.

DOLLARS FOR DEMOCRATS, 1959 by Bernard Hennessy.

THE LOYALTY PLEDGE CONTROVERSY IN THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY by Abraham Holtzman.

CONNECTICUT'S CHALLENGE PRIMARY: A STUDY IN LEGISLATIVE POLITICS by Duane Lockard.

BIPARTISAN COALITION IN ILLINOIS by Thomas B. Littlewood.

CANDIDATE by Joseph P. Lyford.

THE STRUGGLE FOR REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP IN INDIANA, 1954 by Frank Munger.

THE MONRONEY RESOLUTION: CONGRESSIONAL INITIATIVE IN FOREIGN POLICY MAKING by James A. Robinson.

THE NOMINATION OF 'CHIP' BOHLEN by James N. Rosenau.

REPUBLICAN PRIMARY FIGHT: A STUDY IN FACTIONALISM by Rhoten A. Smith and Clarence J. Hein.

A LEGISLATIVE CAMPAIGN FOR A FEDERAL MINIMUM WAGE, 1955 by Gus Tyler.

TWO PARTIES FOR SHREVEPORT by Kenneth N. Vines.

OKLAHOMA GOES WET: THE REPEAL OF PROHIBITION by Robert S. Walker and Samuel C. Patterson.

MEADE ALCORN AND THE 1958 ELECTION by Philip S. Wilder, Jr.

THE DEFEAT OF HOME RULE IN SALT LAKE CITY by J. D. Williams.